

An Essay
on
The Science of Medicine
Respectfully Submitted

To the Faculty of the
Homoeopathic Medical College
of Pennsylvania
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One thousand, eight hundred & fifty three,
by
A. W. Morse
of Waterville N. York.

Medicine as a Science.

Before commencing upon this theme, we will inquire, what is a Science? By examining standard authority we find a Science to be "a collection of the general principles or leading truths, relating to any subject, arranged in systematic order."

Every science is founded upon its general truths or laws, and these being natural laws, whatever may be the date of their discovery, were pre-existent.

What then is the Science of Medicine?
It is that system of knowledge based
upon laws, relative to the cure of dis-
ease; or those laws, by the application
of which, the animal system may
be restored from an abnormal to
its normal state.

The Practice of Medicine is of very
ancient date. As in the earlier
age of the world, disease presented
itself among the human family;
so the more theorising minds en-
deavored to explain its various
causes, and the proper mode of its
extirpation. Innumerable theories
were advanced, the author of each
endeavoring to illumine the reflec-
-tive world, by the productions of
his vigilant cogitations.

But none were allowed long to astonish their wondering disciples, before others would be presented, if anything more hypothetical and visionary than the former. The imaginative minds of the medical aspirants were far more productive of hypotheses, than of facts to substantiate the truth of them.

But although much error has been imbibed from the various speculations, yet occasionally have rays of truth dawned upon us, and within the present century have very rapidly increased to dissipate the darkness of the past.

But omitting farther details in regard to the former state of the Medical Profession, they at present are

divided into two general classes, of Old School, or Allopathists, and New School, or Homoeopaths, and although perfectly adverse in their theory of practice, yet each claiming to be the sustainers of the true Science of Medicine.

The boasted Antignarian School essay to cure disease by the primary effect of the medicine which they administer; consequently giving such as is of a nature which tends to produce a state opposite to that of the disease itself. They profess to adopt, as the foundation of their system, the law expressed by the phrase "*Contraria Contrariis Curantur*."

But may this properly be called a law? Is it in fact a law of nature, that disease may be cured by medicines

possessing a natural tendency to produce a state opposite to that of the disease?

We think not. True they act as ^{or} palliatives, but that only for a short time. Nature always receives a secondary as well as primary effect from the administration of medicines, and which is directly the opposite. Or the primary effect we may call the direct effect of the medicine, and the secondary, the reaction of the system. Of the truth of this assertion we see almost daily evidence. How often do we hear patients complaining of chronic constipation, and by tracing back to the cause we find it to be from taking laxatives for the same disease, the immediate effect of which was, to produce an unnatural diarrhea, but the secondary

and permanent effect of which was to cause nature to react and aggravate the very disease they intended it to cure; and by a few repetitions of this treatment they bring upon themselves constipation of an obstinate form.

Taking purgatives for derangement of stomach and bowels, is another instance in proof of this point. By evacuating them in this manner, nature is merely excited to a more abundant secretion of the unhealthy matter they wished to remove. Consequently in a short time a repetition of the same kind of "regulator of the stomach and bowels" is necessary, and they thereby make a thoroughfare of the digestive organs, through which they send their cathartics on their errands of mercy to regulate

the system into a perfect state of irregularity.

Various instances might be produced, as Dyspepsia, Chronic Gastritis, Intermittent Fever, Nervous Debility, &c.

Even in the common external applications may we see our assertion proved true.

When your hands are cold, if you plunge them into snow for a moment, what is the effect? At first the cold is increased, but in a few moments they are uncomfortably warm. Also the sudden cold bath will produce reaction which will cause increase of temperature and perspiration. But we will not enumerate farther cases as these are sufficient to prove our position.

Then what can we admit their fundamental principle "*Contraria Contrariis*"

"Curantur", to be, but a fundamental falsehood? This being the case, and it being also the basis of their theory of practice, how then can we apply to it the appellation of Science?

But may we find anything more worthy of attention in the New School? They have inscribed on their banners "*Similia Similibus Curantur*".

They practice under the law that the specific of any disease is that medicine which will produce a similar disease in the healthy subject.

This law was first discovered by Samuel Hahnemann, a native of Saxony, about sixty years ago.

From its nature all medicines have to be proven or their properties tested on the healthy subject, before they

can be administered to the sick.

Hahnemann saw the necessity of this, and although the task would be long and painful, yet resolved to be, himself a subject of experiment, and also secured the aid of many of his friends, of different ages and sexes.

And here is one marked point of difference between the two schools.

The Allopathic Materia Medica is formed of knowledge obtained at the bedside of the patient. Consequently they cannot have as definite and perfect a knowledge of the properties of their medicines and that entirely disconnected with effects of disease. But the Homoeopathic Materia Medica is formed from knowledge gained from their action upon those previously in a state of health; the symptoms

presented, are therefore known to be those of the medicine and not of the disease.

If the practice of Allopathy is based upon principles truly scientific, it ought to be ready on the approach of any new disease, to point out at once the proper remedies to meet such disease, and to combat it successfully.

The symptoms presented, once being known, it ought to be able to point directly to the required remedy, without first being obliged to experiment for a long time at the expense of its patients.

Homesopathy, we venture to say, can do this, and here is a second great difference between the two schools.

Long before Hahnemann ever saw a case of Asiatic Cholera, he pointed out the

specific remedies for it in its different forms and stages, which have since proved true, and are yet used with astonishing success.

But how was this disease met by the Allopathic Profession? With fear and trembling. For a long time they were unable to treat it with anything like success. The following Cholera statistics, we quote from Dr. Douglass' excellent work on Homoeopathy.

"Dr. Mabit" (an eminent physician in France) "has calculated the result of the two systems of treatment of Cholera in different places. The general result is as follows;

Treated Allopathically 405,027

Cured 254,788

Died 240,239

giving a percentage of 49 deaths out of every 100.

Treated Homeopathically 2239

Cured 2069

Died 170

giving $\frac{7}{10}$ as the percentage of deaths.

It is officially announced by a commission appointed for that purpose, that in Vienna, under Allopathic treatment, two thirds of the patients died, while under Homeopathic, two thirds recovered. The Prussian State Gazette announces, that within a certain district, Homeopathy cured 86 out of 109, Allopathy 60 out of 199, while nature without a physician, cured 16 out of 49. That is, Homeopathy cured 80 per cent, Allopathy 30, and Nature 32. The Cholera broke out with great violence in

Raab in Hungary. The result in all the cases was; cured by Homeopathy 97 per cent, by Allopathy $56\frac{2}{3}$ per cent."

^{or} The treatment of Cholera in our own country has been parallel to the above.

These facts we think quite conclusive, not only that Homeopathy is capable of meeting new diseases with far better success than Allopathy, but that the assertion made by many of its opponents, that "it ^{is} ineffectual in acute diseases", is very far from being true.

Any true Science will bear inspection. Although tested in its various claims, it will withstand the scrutiny of the critic. Homeopathy will do this.

It is able, not only to meet and withstand Cholera, but any of the acute diseases with which we meet, and that with

astounding success, when compared with the revered old Science of Calomel and the Lancet. For abundant proof of this, compare notes from the diaries of the first physicians of the day, of both schools, in both Europe and America.

And to any who are yet unbelieving, would we say, go to the city hospitals. See the abundant variety of cases presented there; watch the progress of disease; see the effect produced by the different forms of medication; compare the rate per cent of cures; then answer; is Homoeopathy a humbug?

Another point of differing is in the nature of the medicine given in any particular disease, and its modus operandi. Take again a case of constipation. The Allopathist would intend

to cure it by the administration of laxatives, calculated to overpower the disease, and thereby bring nature into its proper state. Of the effect of such treatment, and of the reactive effect of nature we have already spoken.

But the Homeopaths would exhibit an astringent — though the doses would ^{be} of a Homoeopathic size and preparation — and depend entirely upon reaction to remove the disease.

And this leads to the question, what sized doses are best adapted to produce speedy and efficient reaction? Certainly large ones are not, as they would aggravate the disease by their primary effect. Consequently a dose is required not large enough to aggravate the disease by its primary

effect, but sufficiently large to excite nature to react. It may be said, a dose of any size which will not produce a primary, will not a secondary effect. True the one must necessarily follow the other, but the aggravation from the first effect is so slight as hardly to be perceptible, but reaction is palpable and lasting. No new proof is necessary to enforce the truth of this fact, for experience is constantly doing it.

Experience must teach us what the required size of dose must be. It does teach us. And here is a fourth point of differing between the two schools, Homoeopathic doses being very essentially smaller than Allopathic.

But in regard to this point very erroneous opinions have been formed. The opponents of the law *Simila Similibus Curantur*, say that all doses, to come within its pale, must be of a class which they please to term infinitesimals. ^{or} This is a very great mistake. In some cases where there is but little activity of the system, doses of a larger size are required. In all cases should reference be had to the reactive state of nature, and sensibility of the patient, and not to whether they will come under the head of Infinitesimals or Substantials.

A fifth point of distinction is in regard to the manner of preparing medicines. Allopathic medicines being given in large doses, are also given in

a very gross and unattenuated form. Unlike this Homoeopathic remedies are prepared by uniting a small part of the drug, after it has been most thoroughly cleansed, with a much larger part of some non-medicinal substance and mixing them until they become one homogeneous mass. In this manner a certain amount of medicine is brought to occupy a much larger space, and by its particles being so minutely divided and (if I may use the term) etherealised, it is thereby when taken brought into more immediate contact with the surface of the stomach, and much more readily taken up by the absorbents and conveyed to the diseased part.

One argument which the opponents

of Homeopathy present as very conclusive proof of the inefficiency of its remedies, is, that they are able, (in a state of health) to take a considerable quantity of the medicine without producing any perceptible effect.

But this may be invalidated by simply comparing it with other, similar cases.

The human system is much more susceptible of impressions when diseased than it is when well.

Most persons can apply Spirits of Turpentine to the healthy surface without any sense of inconvenience, but if applied to a portion highly inflamed, a severe smarting pain is immediately produced. One of your hands being burned, hold them both to the fire, but at such a distance

that the well one will not be uncomfortably warm. The one previously burned you will immediately draw back in pain, while the well one may be placed still nearer the fire, without producing any uneasy sensation. The same principle is applicable to medicines taken internally. A person may take with impunity, when in health, a quantity of medicine, which if taken when ill, would produce a very decided effect. Then how absurd the argument, that Homoeopathic medicine cannot make a sick man well, because it does not make a well man sick.

Sixth. In the treatment of local diseases, Homoeopathic medication is of a nature to effect only the part

diseased. This as we have already shown is much more susceptible of effect than any other part; and it is owing to this morbid susceptibility, that the efficacy of the medicine is expended on this part, and not on the system generally. But from the amount of medicine given in Allopathic treatment, nature has to yield to its effect, and a kind of drug disease be produced throughout the system.

Seventh. The former does not leave the system reduced after removing the disease, while the latter does.

Persons upon being relieved by Homeopathic remedies, and before becoming acquainted with the manner of their affecting the system, can hardly be made to believe that it was the

medicine that produced the effect, and not that it happened by mere chance. So long has the dragging system prevailed, that it has become a settled opinion, that the sick must be made sicker before they can be cured. That is, that they must be reduced by venesection, purging, vomiting, or in some other way, as the result of effective doses, before a restoration to health can be effected. But, thanks to this age of liberal thinking, the practice of medicine is not always to remain beclouded by Egyptian darkness. A brighter day is dawning and already do we feel its salutary effect. The ancient, though ill founded structure of Medicine is being rebuilt, and erected upon a foundation of

principles truly scientific. Hahnemann has laid the chief corner stone, and may his Disciples continue to erect its columns, until its altitude shall reach the very heavens.

Though many difficulties must be encountered, and mountain obstacles obstruct their way; yet shall these vanish as the morning dew, and success shall crown their efforts.

The Science of Medicine is one of the first importance. When we reflect that it is into the hands of Medical men, the sick trust their lives, we are convinced of the obligations they are under to be well skilled in their profession. To understand thoroughly the human system, the numerous ailments to which it

is subject, and the best mode of cure.

No effort should be considered too great, no task too laborious, by which they may enrich their store of knowledge, and promote their capability in alleviating human suffering.

Aside from the Clergy, there is no class of men whose usefulness may be as great as that of Physicians, and if they rightly employ the power they possess, Humanity will never cease to bless them, and they will have the assurance that they have not labored in vain.